

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8071

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 2807

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJ: THE INSURGENCY IN THAILAND - JANUARY WRAP-UP

SUMMARY: THE THAI INSURGENCY IS STILL CONFINED TO REMOTE SECTIONS OF THE NORTH, NORTHEAST, WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTH REGIONS WITHOUT ANY SIGNS THAT IT WILL EXPAND GUERRILLA ZONES SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE DRY SEASON INCREASE IN CT-INITIATED INCIDENTS HAS TAKEN PLACE, BUT JANUARY REPORTS RECEIVED SO FAR INDICATE THAT CT ACTIVITY IS STILL WELL WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF ROUTINE DRY SEASON OPERATIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF TWO ATTACKS AGAINST DISTRICT CAPITOLS. THERE IS STILL AMPLE TIME FOR THE CT TO KICK OFF AN OFFENSIVE WITH LIMITED OBJECTIVES DURING THIS DRY SEASON, BUT THEY HAVE NOT YET DONE SO. END SUMMARY.

THE COMMUNIST INSURGENTS IN THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST WERE INVOLVED IN SOME 100 VIOLENT INCIDENTS DURING JANUARY 1976. PREDOMINANTLY CONSISTING OF HARASSING ATTACKS AND CLASHES WITH SMALL ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT (RTG) PATROLS, THE INCIDENTS REFLECT THE ANNUAL INCREASE IN VIOLENT ACTIVITY FOLLOWING THE END OF THE

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RAINY SEASON, BUT DO NOT INDICATE AN OFFENSIVE

BY THE COMMUNIST TERRORISTS (CT). INSURGENTS IN THE SOUTH WERE RELATIVELY INACTIVE, WITH ONLY FOUR VIOLENT INCIDENTS REPORTED SO FAR THIS YEAR. THE LOW LEVEL OF ACTION IN THE SOUTH, WHERE THE RAINY SEASON IS HAMPERING MOVEMENT, IS ALSO CONSISTENT WITH PAST YEARS' LEVELS AND WAS TO BE EXPECTED.

2. IN THE NORTH, MOST OF THE 40 INCIDENTS REPORTED IN JANUARY OCCURRED IN THE TRI-PROVINCE (PHITSANULOK, PHETCHABUN AND WESTERN LOEI) AREA (22 VIOLENT INCIDENTS). THE ACTIVITY IN THE TRI-PROVINCE AREA, WHICH ACCOUNTED FOR THE LARGEST NUMBER OF RTG CASUALTIES IN THE NORTH (THREE KILLED AND 17 WOUNDED), MOSTLY TOOK PLACE IN LOM SAK DISTRICT OF PHETCHABUN WHERE TASK FORCE 343 IS PROVIDING SECURITY FOR ROAD BUILDING CREWS. THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENT IN THE NORTH OCCURRED ON JANUARY 26 WHEN A TRUCK CARRYING BORDER PATROL CHARIM SUB-DISTRICT OF NAN WAS AMBUSHED AT QA 0379 IN MUANG DISTRICT OF NAN. BPP CASUALTIES WERE TWO KILLED AND 13 WOUNDED, FIVE SERIOUSLY. ANOTHER INCIDENT, SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE OF THE LOCATION, OCCURRED ON JANUARY 18 AT A BPP BASE NEAR THE VILLAGE OF THI LAI-PA (MS 5699) IN SANGKHLABURI DISTRICT OF KANCHANABURI PROVINCE. AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF CT (REPORTED BY ISOC TO BE FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND REGION 20 INSURGENT ORGANIZATION IN UMPHANG DISTRICT OF TAK), POSSIBLY NUMBER 40 (SEE USDAO BANGKOK 0053 JAN 76), ATTACKED THE BPP BASE. TWO BPP WERE KILLED AND THREE WOUNDED. A FEMALE CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY STUDENT VISITING THE BASE WAS ALSO WOUNDED. REGION 20 CT HAVE TRAVELLED IN NORTHER KANCHANABURI INFREQUENTLY FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, AND IT IS PART OF THEIR SOUTHERN EXPANSION AREA, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST CT-INITIATED VIOLENT INCIDENT SOUTH OF UMPHANG DISTRICT OF TAK WITHIN MEMORY.

3. IN NORTHEAST THAILAND, THE MAJORITY OF THE INCIDENTS REPORTED IN JANUARY WERE ALONG THE UDORN/ LOEI AND SAKON NAKHON/UDORN BORDERS, WHERE THE ROYAL THAI ARMY IS CONDUCTING OPERATIONS. MOST OF THE 42

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VIOLENT INCIDENTS (OF A TOTAL OF 63 FOR THE ENTIRE NORTHEAST) REPORTED IN THESE TWO AREAS RESULTED FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE ARMY TROOPS. OF THE THIRTY-NINE CT (INCLUDING MANY SUPPORTERS) WHO TURNED THEMSELVES IN TO THE RTG OR WERE CAPTURED IN THE NORTHEAST DURING JANUARY, TWENTY-EIGHT OF THEM WERE FROM THE SAKON NAKHON AREA, INDICATING THAT THE RTA OPERATION THERE IS ACHIEVING SOME SUCCESS. ACTIVITY ALONG

THE THAI/CAMBODIAN BORDER WAS LIGHT THROUGHOUT THE MONTH WITH ONLY SEVEN VIOLENT INCIDENTS REPORTED, ALL OF WHICH WERE IN THE KORAT/BURIRAM/PRACHINBURI BORDER AREA. SEVENTEEN RTG OFFICIALS WERE KILLED AND 37 WERE WOUNDED WHILE ELEVEN CT WERE KILLED IN THE NORTHEAST DURING JANUARY.

4. TWICE DURING JANUARY THE CT ATTACKED DISTRICT CAPITOLS, THE FIRST TIME THIS HAS HAPPENDED SINCE THE ARMED STRUGGLE BEGAN IN 1965. ON JANUARY 23, ABOUT 200 CT ATTACKED THE THUNG YAI (NK 3826) DISTRICT OFFICE AND PROVINCIAL POLICE (PP) STATION IN NAKHON SI THAMMARAT PROVINCE, OEVERWHELMING THE SMALL PP CONTINGENT AND CAPTURING THE POLICE STATION. ONE PP WAS WOUNDED AND THE CT CAPTURED A LARGE NUMBER OF WEAPONS, SOME COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES. TWO DAYS LATER, ANOTHER 200-MAN CT FORCE ATTACKED THE NAM SOM (TE 0367) DISTRICT CAPITAL IN UDORN WITH ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADES AND SMALL ARMS, WOUNDING ONE POLICEMAN AND DAMAGING THE DISTRICT POLICE STATION AND POWER PLANT. THE POLICE COMPLEMENT AT NAM SOM WAS UP TO STRENGTH AND THE CT WERE UNABLE TO OVERRUN THE POLICE STATION AS THEY DID IN THUNG YAI, BUT THE ATTACK ITSELF REPRESENTS THE CT'S WILLINGNESS AND CAPABILITY TO ESCALATE THE ARMED STRUGGLE FROM THE TAMBON TO THE DISTRICT LEVEL. (ACCORDING TO CONSUL UDORN, THE 200 CT FIGURE IN THE NAM SOM ATTACK WAS PROBABLY INFLATED, AS COULD WELL BE THE CASE WITH THE THUNG YAI ATTACK, BUT NEVERTHELESS THE MULTI-COMPANY OPERATIONS REPORTED IN THE APRIL TO AUGUST 1975 PERIOD SEEM TO ONCE AGAIN BE TAKING PLACE IN ISOLATED INSTANCES).

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8072  
INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 2807  
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5. WHILE THE CT OFFENSIVE IN THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST ANTICIPATED FOR THIS DRY SEASON HAS STILL NOT MATERIALIZED, THERE IS STILL PLENTY OF TIME FOR THE CT TO ESCALATE THEIR OPERATIONS, BOTH IN SIZE AND FREQUENCY, DURING THIS DRY SEASON IF THEY FEEL THEY ARE READY AND CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING SUSTAINED LARGE-SCALE OPERATIONS. SOME RTG SOURCES ARE NOW PREDICTING THAT THE OFFENSIVE WILL BE INITIATED IN APRIL. APRIL IS THE MONTH WHEN THE MEKONG IS AT ITS LOWEST LEVEL (AFFORDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INCREASED EXTERNAL SUPPORT), THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALL OF SOUTH VIETNAM, THE MONTH FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE US WITHDRAWAL OF COMBAT FORCES AND THE MONTH IN WHICH NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN THAILAND. ANY OFFENSIVE THE CT LAUNCH WILL HAVE ONLY LIMITED OBJECTIVES, AND THEY COULD PROBABLY SUSTAIN A HIGHER THAN-USUAL LEVEL OF OPERATIONS FOR ABOUT 60 DAYS. IF AN OFFENSIVE DOES MATERIALIZE IN APRIL, IT WOULD PROBABLY NOT CONTINUE INTO THE RAINY SEASON, WHICH HITS THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST IN LATE APRIL OR EARLY MAY.

WHITEHOUSE

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